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SIPDIS

TREASURY FOR DPETERS, RHALL, RABDULRAZAK

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SUBJECT: NIGERIA: OVER AC OBJECTIONS, EKITI HELD LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

¶1. (U) Summary: Over objections by the Action Congress (AC), which had complained that the State Independent Electoral Commission's (SIEC) composition was not in accordance with the constitution, Ekiti State held local government area (LGA) elections on December ¶20. The AC did not participate in the election and turnout was low, although widespread anticipated violence did not occur. An NGO chairman said he witnessed PDP and SIEC officials thumb printing ballot papers. End Summary

¶2. (U) On December 20, the Government of Ekiti State conducted chairmanship and councillorship elections in Local Government Areas (LGAs). The state Independent Electoral Commission (SIEC) declared the ruling Peoples Democratic Party winner of all the 16 Chairmanship elections and 175 of 177 councillorships. All Nigerian People Party (ANPP) candidate Sunday Omosilade won a seat. The SIEC canceled the councillorship election in one ward due to alleged electoral malpractices.

¶3. (U) According to press reports, a team of independent observers who witnessed the election said the election was free and fair and was the best ever conducted in the state. The leading opposition party, Action Congress (AC) Spokesman, however, faulted the observers' assessment. (Note: The AC did not participate in the election because it alleged that the composition of the SEIC was unconstitutional. End Note.) AC Spokesman Yemi Adaramodu told the press, December 22, that no objective report could emanate from an observer team that had been accommodated, fed and paid by the state government.

¶4. (U) Yemi alleged gross irregularities in the conduct of the election, claiming that many voters stayed away and the ruling PDP was able to use the day to thumbprint ballot papers in their private homes and voting centers. He said violence occurred in some wards when PDP supporters attempted to snatch ballot boxes from election officials and were resisted by some opposition members. A Director of the Ekiti-based non governmental organization (NGO) confirmed to PolSpec that voter turnout was low. He alleged that only seven voters voted in an entire ward in his neighborhood. He observed PDP and SIEC officials openly thumb print ballot papers to inflate election results.

Hudson